

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY'S YOUNG COMPANY PRESENTS

Romeo y Julieta



TEACHER'S RESOURCE PACKET

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Welcome to Young Company!

About BYU Young Company

The Young Company serves as a training ground for both BYU actors and teaching artists wanting to work in theatre for young audiences. The group performs in front of 16,000 young people each year on topics that deal with everyday struggles encountered by people of all ages.

What is a dramaturg, and why do they make teacher's packets?

As described on the website for LMDA (Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas,) dramaturgs today have a variety of responsibilities. "Working in theatres and playwrights' organizations, in colleges and universities, and on a project-by-project basis, dramaturgs contextualize the world of a play; establish connections among the text, actors, and audience; offer opportunities for playwrights; generate projects and programs; and create conversations about plays in their communities."

In an effort to "create conversations" about the Young Company productions in our local communities, the dramaturgs at BYU create teacher's packets to share with all educators who will participate in these touring shows. We hope you will use them to enhance the experience your students have and further engage with the performance in ways that are meaningful specifically to your students. We hope you'll discover helpful approaches to learning more about the form and content of our productions in the attached lesson plans and activity ideas!

Welcome Letter

Everyone knows the tragic story of Romeo and Juliet: boy and girl meet, fall in love, can't be together, and die. But maybe the real tragedy of this story is how preventable the sadness was. If our star-crossed teenagers had communicated more clearly with the adults in their lives, all of the heartache might have been avoided.

It is for this reason that we have chosen to focus around the themes of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Especially when presenting this story to a young audience, the recounting of an adolescent love story that lasts barely three days isn't the most powerful message we can send. However, Shakespeare's immortal tragedy does teach us a lot about the importance of clear communication in our families, relationships, and communities. How many of our problems could be avoided with a few simple and patient conversations? We believe that applying the lessons of *Romeo y Julieta* in our own lives will not only improve communication, but greatly improve our relationships as well.

As we pondered how to make these themes more applicable to our student audiences, our director, Julia Ashworth, felt inspired to emphasize the miscommunications that happen across communities by transforming the play into a bilingual production. In our present day, when news outlets and social media are full of bad sentiments toward Latinos and other people of color in our country, we wanted to extend an invitation to form more united communities, starting in Provo. The play ends as two households unite in the wake of tragedy. It is our hope that our community may unite without such sad circumstances-- that the barriers of misunderstanding and miscommunication may be transcended and that our community may be stronger than ever before.

We hope you enjoy the show, but much more, we hope it may serve as a starting point for the conversations that will make families, friendships, and communities closer.

Emily Dickerson, Hannah Gunson
Dramaturgs

Theatre Etiquette

Just like the performers, the audience also has an important role to play. Because some of the students may not have attended a play before, below are expectations to help them prepare for our performance!

- Remember to use the restroom before the show.
- No photography, please, and be sure to turn off your cellphones.
- Before the play starts, quietly follow the actors' instructions when they are seating you.
- Remember to sit flat on the floor with your legs crossed. This allows everyone to see the actors better and prevents limbs from falling asleep during the show.
- During the show, follow the actors' instructions when you are asked to participate.
- Don't speak with your neighbors during the show. We want everyone to be able to hear the actors.
- Please enjoy the show and laugh when you think it's funny!
- You can clap at the end.

Wiggle Workout

60-30-15

In small groups (5-10 members), students review what they already know about *Romeo y Julieta*. During the first round, groups perform a 60 second version of *Romeo y Julieta*. Students should portray relevant characters and plot points within the time limit. Students have 3 minutes to plan before performing, either for one or a few other groups or for the entire class (up to the teacher's discretion). After each group has performed their 60 second version, they perform again, condensing the performance to 30 seconds. In the following round, performances are shortened to 15 seconds. If so desired, the teacher may also choose to shorten scenes to 5 seconds and even 1 second.

Students discuss plot points that remained in each version of the performance and, thus, the most important points and characters in the story. This should help to prepare students to view *Romeo y Julieta*, which is a slightly different interpretation than how the play is traditionally performed.

Play Synopsis - *Romeo y Julieta*

In a setting without a particular time or place, two families, the Montagues and the Capuletos, are constantly at war with each other. Thus, it doesn't bode well when the only children from each of those households, Romeo and Julieta, meet and fall in love. Rather than express these feelings to their parents, the lovers make a plan to secretly marry.

But their deception comes back to bite them when Romeo reluctantly gets into a fight with Julieta's cousin, Teobaldo. After Teobaldo kills Romeo's friend, Mercutio, Romeo kills Teobaldo, and is banished from the city.

Meanwhile, Julieta is informed by her parents that they've picked out the perfect husband for her, totally unaware that she's already married! To avoid this second marriage, Julieta plans with a local abbess to take a potion that makes her appear dead, so her family will leave her at the cemetery and Romeo can come back for her.

But the Abbess's letter explaining all this to Romeo gets lost in the mail, and when Romeo sees Julieta looking dead, he takes poison and dies. Julieta wakes up to find her dead husband and kills herself, only for *real* this time. With their children dead, the mothers of the Montague and Capuleto families finally realize the folly of their fight and make peace, sadly much too late for their children.

Before the show...

Activity Title: Whisper Down the Lane

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials Needed: none

In groups of 10, students sit in a large circle. A teacher or other adult chooses a student to start and whispers a sentence in their ear or shows them a sentence written on a slip of paper. This should be a bilingual line from the play. The starting student then whispers this sentence to the student to their left, who also whispers to their neighbor and so on, until the sentence returns to the starting student. The starting student says in full voice the sentence as they heard it from their neighbor, and then reveals what the sentence started as. Normally, the passage of words from person to person will have a distorting effect on the sentence. Students will then be able to share their experience listening to and speaking the sentence. Discussion questions should include the following:

- Were you sure of what you heard?
- If you didn't know exactly what your neighbor said, what did you do?
- Why do you think the sentence changed so much?
- What does this game teach us about communication?

After the show ...

Activity Title: Letters to (Romeo y) Julieta

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials Needed: Postcards or paper, writing utensils

Discussion question: What problems in the play could have been solved if people talked more openly to each other?

After a few answers, actors distribute postcards or paper to students. Direct students to think of someone that they could communicate better with: a parent, sibling, friend, teacher, etc. Ask them to think of a misunderstanding they have had, or something that they wish this person knew. Then give students the remaining time to write a short note to the person they thought of. Be sure to tell students that they don't have to deliver these letters if they aren't comfortable doing so, but it might be a great way to help them understand or be understood by someone they care about.

Lesson Plans

Communication in *Romeo and Juliet*

Grade: 6th

Length: 60 minutes

Materials:

- Teacher-in-role object (a scarf, a hat, a clipboard, etc.)
- Whiteboard and markers
- Students need something to write on

Standards:

FACS Strand 3 Standard 1 e: Explore effective personal, verbal, and nonverbal communication.
FACS Strand 3 Standard 1 g: Identify steps of problem-solving.

TH: Cr 2-6 a: Use critical analysis to improve, refine, and evolve original ideas and artistic choices in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work.

TH: Cn 11.1.6 a: Identify universal themes or common social issues and express them through a drama/theatre work.

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an ability to use various forms of communication as a means of problem solving by reworking a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* to include clearer forms of communication.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of different points of view and develop original character ideas by stepping in role as a citizen of Verona in a teacher-in-role drama experience.

Hook (5-10 minutes):

Have the class stand up and play the human knot game. Each student should grab hands with two different people they are not standing beside, then all work together to untangle themselves. Teacher can participate or side coach.

Once the class has successfully untangled themselves, have them do it again, grabbing hands with new partners this time. This time through however, they are no longer allowed to talk or make any noises.

Once they have finished, have them form the knot once again, again grabbing hands with new partners. This time, on top of not being able to speak, they must do it with their eyes

closed. (This variation can be skipped if the class is large or the previous two activities filled the time.)

Let the class work at it until either they succeed or they are stuck. Have them gather for a short discussion and reflection of the activity. Ask:

- Was this activity hard? Why or why not?
- Which variation was the most difficult for you? Why?
- What role did communication have in accomplishing your goal?
- How can miscommunication complicate our lives?

Learning Engagement 1 (30 minutes): Teacher-in-role

Lead the discussion on communication into reflecting on the production of *Romeo y Julieta* the class saw. Ask:

- Where did you see miscommunication in *Romeo y Julieta*?
- This production was a bilingual adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. How did this element of language further add miscommunication into the story?

With the student's help, review the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*. It may be helpful to draw a timeline of events on the board.

Once the plot has been reviewed, invite the class to imagine themselves as citizens of Verona, the city where *Romeo and Juliet* is set. Allow them to think for a moment and decide whether they are a Capulet, a Montague, or aligned with neither household. Once each student has made their choice, have each group gather together and instruct them to briefly review the story from their group's perspective. How would a Capulet have understood what happened? How would a Montague? Or someone who is neither? Remind them that while we as an audience understood everything that was going on, none of the people in the city did.

Give the groups a few minutes to gather their thoughts. Visit each group separately and check in, give guidance where needed.

Once the groups have an idea of how they would have seen the events, inform the class that shortly an investigating reporter will arrive on the scene. This reporter is from another town and wants to write an article about the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. They are hoping to interview the people of Verona to get an understanding of what occurred. Remind the class that even though none of their groups has the entire truth, they all *think* they do, and so should answer questions accordingly.

Using a small costume item (like a hat or a scarf) and/or a prop (like a clipboard or notebook), step into role as the investigating reporter. Remember- the students will follow your lead on how into the roleplay you are. There is no need to be excessive, but the more committed you are to playing the reporter the more likely the class is to responding to you. Your character should know nothing about the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, and so should be discovering everything from the students.

Introduce yourself to the class, tell them why you have come, and begin asking questions. Some questions will need to be developed on the spot to respond to what answers the students give you, but here are some suggestions for questions to begin with:

- How did Romeo and Juliet die?
- Whose fault was it?
- Were there any outside pressures on them that may have brought them to this?
- What was Romeo like?
- What was Juliet like?
- Why was there such contention between the Capulets and the Montagues?
- Etc.

Continue to ask questions in role until you, as the reporter, can put together a story of what happened. Ideally, the story you get should not be exactly right and there should be some confusion about which side of the story (Capulets, Montagues, or outsiders) is the correct one.

Learning Engagement 2 (10 minutes): Miscommunication Discussion

Step out of role as the reporter and invite the students to step out of role as Verona citizens. Everyone is now back to their regular selves. Ask the students what they saw happening in the roleplay. Ask for some volunteers to share their experience and what they noticed about communication. Did the reporter get the true story? Why or why not?

Ask the students to think about communication within their own lives. Why is clear communication so important? Do we ever get the whole story? How can we have better communication with each other?

Bring up modern technology. How does technology help us communicate? In what ways does it keep us from communicating? Spend as much time on this topic as needed.

Conclusion/Assessment (10 minutes): Rewriting Scenes

Refer back to the Romeo and Juliet timeline on the board. As a class, identify a few scenes where miscommunication occurred. Examples of these could be where the Capulets tell Juliet she is engaged to Paris or when Romeo hears Juliet is dead. Tell the class to consider how these scenes might have played out differently if they had had better communication or if they'd had modern technology. Tell the students to choose one of these scenes and then rewrite the scene in their own words with better communication, including modern technology if they want.

Once they are finished have the class turn their rewritten scenes in. Save them for review or use in a later lesson.

Iambic Pentameter in *Romeo and Juliet*

Grade: 6th

Length: 45-60 minutes

Materials:

- “Bunny Bunny” Game instructions:
<http://www.improvinthepark.com/2013/12/10/improv-games-bunny-bunny/>
- “The Sketch Show—English Class” video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFVLTkkt3A>
- “Examples from *Romeo and Juliet*” with lines cut into individual strips. (Found at the end of this lesson plan)

UEN Core Standards:

Reading: Literature Standard 7: Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

Language Standard 3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Theatre Perform Strand 6.T.P.5: Communicate meaning using the voice through volume, pitch, tone, rate, and clarity.

Theatre Respond Strand Standard 6.T.R.1: Demonstrate audience skills of observing attentively and responding appropriately in classroom presentations, rehearsals, and live performance settings.

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an ability to identify iambic pentameter by performing various lines of their own as well as lines from “*Romeo and Juliet*” for each other in class.

Hook (10-15 minutes):

- Play “Bunny Bunny” with the students (link with instructions in materials).
- Debrief:
 - What was easy about this game?
 - What was difficult about the game?
 - Why is rhythm/pacing important in this game?
 - What does rhythm/pacing have to do with Shakespeare?

Instruction (25-30 minutes):

- Talk about how Shakespeare used poetic devices in his plays to create rhythm and emphasize certain words and ideas. By understanding this rhythm, we can learn a lot about the character speaking the words and the way Shakespeare intended the words to be spoken. This rhythm also made Shakespeare’s words sound more poetic.

- Can you think of any parts of the production of *“Romeo y Julieta”* we watched that sounded particularly poetic?
 - Share that the way that we talk and say words actually has a poetry and a rhythm to it.
 - Watch “The Sketch Show—English Class” video (link in materials) with the class. Point out the man who has “trouble with his emphasis.” Isn’t it silly that he doesn’t know which syllables to emphasize? We naturally are emphasizing certain syllable on words to make a rhythm without even knowing it!
 - Write the words “iambic pentameter” on the board. Share that this is one of the “poetic devices” Shakespeare used to create his poetry. Break down the words with the class together.
- Iambic: an iamb is two syllables in which the first syllable isn’t emphasized and the second syllable is. Use an example of a person’s name or a city.
 - § Example: “Detroit.” We naturally say it and emphasize the second syllable: “de-TROIT.” Wouldn’t it sound silly if someone came up and said it like “DE-troit?”
 - § This is why it sounds weird to say “em-PHA-sis.” Because we naturally want to say it like “EM-phasis.” Words have a natural rhythm.
 - § Ask the students to think of and share other words that are naturally iambs.
 - Today, obey, diverged, because, etc.
 - § You can also put two single syllable words together to make an iamb.
 - “I will,” “Don’t tell,” “Wait up.”
- Pentameter a rhythm with five of something.
 - § Penta = five, meter = rhythm
 - So “iambic pentameter” means that it’s a rhythm with five iambs in it. An iamb has two syllables, so a line of iambic pentameter has ten syllables in each line.
 - Write down or project on a screen the first few lines of Romeo’s “But soft, what light through yonder window breaks.” Speech. Write down or project next to it the Nurses lines beginning with “Well sir, my mistress.” (Found at the end of this lesson plan)
 - Which one of these is iambic pentameter and which one is not?
 - § Romeo’s lines are and the Nurse’s aren’t.
 - Why do you think Shakespeare sometimes used poetic devices and sometimes didn’t?
 - § Rich characters used poetry a lot and poor characters don’t
 - § Romeo was being all lovey—feeling strong emotions
 - Read Romeo’s lines together while over-exaggerating the rhythm of iambic pentameter. Then try and do the same thing for the Nurse’s lines. It doesn’t really work because the natural rhythm isn’t there.

Application (10-15 minutes):

- Hand out slips of paper and have the students try to write a sentence in iambic pentameter on it. Tell them it has to be a sentence that would be appropriate for kindergartners to read. It can’t be inappropriate or vulgar. Remind them that iambic pentameter
 - Is ten syllables that naturally are un-emphasized, then emphasized.
 - Have the students put their sentences into a hat or bowl and have the random lines from Romeo and Juliet cut into strips in another hat or bowl.
 - Form the students into two lines facing each other and have them take turns drawing a sentence from each hat and “performing” that sentence to the person opposite them. After each sentence, ask the student to identify if the sentence they read was iambic pentameter or not.

- Debrief:
 - What were some of the ways we could identify what was iambic pentameter and what was not?
 - Was it difficult to write your sentences? Why or why not?
 - What is the difference between reading these lines on paper and “performing” them for each other?
 - Would it have been easier to understand the poetry in “*Romeo y Julieta*” by reading it or by seeing it performed? Why or why not?

Examples from *Romeo and Juliet*:

NURSE: Well, sir; my mistress is the sweetest lady—Lord, Lord! when 'twas a little prating thing:—O, there is a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she, good soul, had as lief see a toad, a very toad, as see him.

ROMEO:
 But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
 It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!
 Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
 Who is already sick and pale with grief
 That thou her maid art far more fair than she.

Iambic pentameter lines from *Romeo and Juliet*:

I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks.

See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
 O that I were a glove upon that hand.

It is my lady; O, it is my love!

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
 By any other name would smell as sweet;

Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 And he will make the face of heav'n so fine
 That all the world will be in love with night

O, I have bought the mansion of a love,

Ah, well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

O, break, my heart! poor bankrupt, break at once!

Lord, how my head aches! what a head have I!

A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life.

Non-iambic pentameter lines from Romeo and Juliet (Prose)

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.

You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for, in the great chamber.

Alas poor Romeo! he is already dead; stabbed with a white wench's black eye; shot through the ear with a love-song.

Thou wast never with me for any thing when thou wast not there for the goose.

now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art,

Peter, take my fan, and go before and apace.

Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man:

Love and Hate in *Romeo and Juliet*

Grade: 6th

Length: 45-50 minutes

Materials:

- “Romeo and Juliet” characters and descriptions (found after this lesson plan)

UEN Core Standards:

Reading: Informational Text Standard 3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Writing Standard 4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

Theatre Create Strand Standard 6.T.CR.5: Create characters through imagination, physical movement, gesture, sound and/or speech and facial expression.

Theatre Connect Strand Standard 6.T.CO.3: Investigate universal or common social issues and express them through a drama/theatre work.

Objective:

Language Arts: Students will demonstrate an ability to identify meaning within a text by writing a letter explaining the feelings of characters within “Romeo and Juliet.”

Theatre: Students will demonstrate an ability to understand character motivation by playing and reflecting on characters in “Romeo and Juliet”

Hook (5-10 minutes):

- Play “Endless monologue”
 - Instruction: Have the students find a partner and their own space in the room. Have each student think for a minute about something that really annoys them. Why does this thing annoy them? Think about all of the details. Next, have the student take turns sharing with each other the thing that annoys them. There’s a catch, however. The goal of the student sharing is to see how long they can talk about that thing that annoys them without ANY pauses at all. The moment they run out of things to say or can’t think of something new to say for a few seconds, it’s time for the partners to switch and allow the other person to share.
 - Next, have the student’s repeat the process, but this time talk about something they really love.
- Debrief:
 - What were some of the things that annoyed you?
 - What were some of the things you loved?
 - Was it more difficult to think of things to say about what annoyed you or about things you loved? Why or why not?

Instruction (25 minutes):

- Share that in the production of *"Romeo y Julieta"* we watched, a lot of characters had strong feelings about certain people/things.
 - What were some people/things that were loved in *Romeo y Julieta*?
 - § Romeo, Julieta, Tybalt, Mercutio, Roses, light, etc.
 - What were some people/things that were hated in *Romeo y Julieta*?
 - § Romeo, Julieta, Tybalt, Mercutio, Capulets, Montagues,
 - Why is it that the same people were both loved and hated in this play?
 - § Depends on the perspective of who's doing the loving/hating?
 - What do you think might have happened in the show if the characters had just tried harder to understand each other and what each other loved?
- Share that today we're going to spend some time learning more about what some of the characters in *Romeo y Julieta* felt strongly about.
 - Split the class into partnerships and have them pick a partner A and a partner B.
 - Give all of the "A" partners a slip of paper with a *Romeo y Julieta* character and description on it (found after this lesson plan). Explain that in just a couple of minutes partner B will have to act as a news reporter who is trying to interview partner A's character about why they think Romeo and Juliet died and how they feel about it. Remember to take into consideration what partner A's character feels about the people involved and WHY they feel that way. They can even make up their "why" as long as it fits with the character.
 - Allow the students a minute or two to figure out their roles and to practice their "interview."
 - Create an audience and have each partnership come up and briefly do their interview. Ask questions such as:
 - Who/what did this character feel strongly about?
 - How could you tell?
 - What problems could/did this create in the play?
 - What would have to happen for this person to change their mind about the things/people they hate?

Application (10-15 minutes):

- Have the students imagine that they are still in the mind of the character they either played or interviewed. If they were that character, imagine that they have had a change of heart about one person/group they hated at the beginning of the play. If their character could write a letter to that person, what would they now say?
- Have the students write a letter as if they were the *Romeo y Julieta* character they played/interviewed. This letter should be written to the person/group they have changed their mind about. In the letter have them
 - Explain why they thought badly about the person in the first place
 - Explain how they started to change their minds
 - Explain what they think is good about that person now.
 - § While some of these ideas can be known from the play, they can also make some reasons up. For example, Lord Capulet might have changed his minds about Romeo because he discovered how good Romeo was a baseball.
- If you choose, you can have some students share their letters with the class.

Romeo and Juliet characters and descriptions:

Romeo: (Juliet's love, son of Montagues, cousin to Benvolio)

- Loves Juliet, Mercutio, Friar
- Hates Tybalt
- Unsure about Capulets

Juliet: (Romeo's love, daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet, cousin to Tybalt, unwillingly engaged to Paris)

- Loves Romeo, Nurse, Tybalt, Friar
- Hates Paris
- Unsure about Lady Capulet, Lord Capulet

Lord Capulet: (Juliet's father, husband of Lady Capulet, uncle to Tybalt, sets up Juliet to marry Paris)

- Loves himself, lady Capulet, Paris
- Hates all Montagues
- Unsure about Juliet, Nurse

Lady Capulet: (Juliet's mother, Lord Capulet's wife, aunt to Tybalt, goes along with Lord Capulet in all things)

- Loves Lord Capulet, Juliet, Paris
- Hates all Montagues
- Unsure about Nurse

Lord Montague: (Romeo's father, Benvolio's uncle)

- Loves Romeo
- Hates all Capulets

Friar: (Priest who marries Romeo and Juliet in secret. Tries to keep them together)

- Loves Romeo, Juliet, Capulets, Montagues
- Hates Satan, Capulet/Montague feud
- Unsure about Prince

Benvolio: (Cousin to Romeo, Nephew to Lord Montague)

- Loves himself, Romeo, all Montagues
- Hates Tybalt, all Capulets
- Unsure about Nurse

Tybalt: (Cousin to Juliet, nephew to Lord Capulet)

- Loves himself, all Capulets
- Hates Romeo, Mercutio, all Montagues